

PORTRAIT OF BLACKSBURG TOMORROW

The Town's Vision for the Future

2046 A.D.

Blacksburg is an attractive and thriving community renowned for its quality of life and natural beauty. The town is nestled between mountain ranges that remain in a natural state with sparse, well-controlled development. Blacksburg is a community of fewer than 60,000 people. The town is noted for its scenery, environmental awareness, and clean appearance. There are a variety of housing types in Town serving all income levels. Neighborhood styles range from rural residential, suburban, and urban village to mixed-use residential with commercial.

Parks and public areas throughout Town preserve open space and scenic views. An extensive network of greenways with public trails connects neighborhoods to other neighborhoods, commercial areas, and the university. This linear network of open space is primarily used for recreation, commuting, and environmental management. Many residents walk, bike, or skate to their destination. There is a central common adjacent to downtown, which serves as the focus of the downtown area and the hub of the greenway network. Stream valleys are preserved in an open state such that many brooks and small streams, in particular the tributaries of Tom's and Stroubles creeks, visibly wind through the town. The trails in Town connect with adjacent national parks and local recreation areas. The Huckleberry Trail extends to New River Trail State Park and the Jefferson-George Washington National Forest.

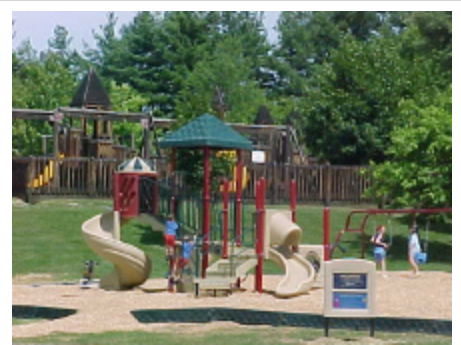


Figure P-1, Municipal Park

Neighborhoods east of the Bypass are well established with mature landscaping and properties are well maintained. The area west of the Bypass is largely open with scenic views of the Tom's Creek Basin. Rural residential clusters dot the area overlooking this stream valley, which is a public park. The preservation of these large and scenic areas of open space, and steep slopes has been achieved through the ability of property owners to receive density bonuses for the preservation of significant open space. Some properties in this area are agricultural, providing pastureland. Trout fishing and other recreational use of Tom's Creek is a major attraction, and bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian trails meander through the valley. A variety of shops are interspersed within the neighborhoods and are used as community gathering places.

The historic downtown has small town character and charm with buildings no more than two or three stories in height, mature street trees, brick walkways, pedestrian benches, historic markers, and post top lighting. The storefronts are close to the road and attractive canopies and signs indicate each shop. Hanging baskets and flower gardens along the streets are constant reminders of the value the community places on appearance. The Blacksburg Historic District, including the downtown and surrounding residential areas, contains residential houses, specialty shops, inns, cafes, and professional offices in structures originally built as private homes. Parking areas are small in scale and tucked behind structures to emphasize the pedestrian focus of the area. The Miller Southside Historic District has a stronger historic fabric due its higher percentage of contributing structures. The area is primarily residential with mix-uses in the houses along Main Street.

Organized recreation opportunities abound for children, adults, and seniors including both team sports and individual activities on a year round basis. The town hosts sporting events including international bicycle races, mountain bike races, soccer tournaments, Senior Olympics, and collegiate sports. In addition, a minor league baseball team calls Blacksburg home. Festivals, which are family focused, are frequent throughout the year and draw tourists from across the country.

Blacksburg is a base for tourists frequenting the natural and regional attractions of the area such as the New River, Appalachian Trail, national forests, state parks, historic landmarks, and ecosystem preserves. Virginia Tech hosts teams from across the nation in intercollegiate sports.



The town has a strong and diverse base of employment centers, which includes service, retail, commercial, and industry. Blacksburg leads the region, and is renowned, for encouraging high tech, clean industries that support, and are served by, university research initiatives. [Virginia Tech](#) remains the major employer in the area and acts as an international base for research, bringing experts into the area for symposiums and project collaboration. In addition, the university educates students world wide through satellite and global telecommunications resources.

Residences and businesses access the [Blacksburg Electronic Village](#), or its successor, to request and provide services. A significant volume of retail shopping is accomplished across the Internet and other communication networks, which has reduced traffic congestion in regional retail centers. Many local businesses, including the business centers in the South Main, Downtown, and Prices Fork commercial areas, market their products internationally and provide workspace to employees of worldwide corporations. These business centers provide access for administrative support, bookkeeping services, conference areas, reproduction machines, and other fundamental business resources.

The town boasts a culturally diverse population with access to many opportunities to appreciate the arts. Many authors and artists make Blacksburg their home. In participation with the university, the community sponsors performing arts, exhibits, and seminars. Many activities are available for retirees, organized by the town and privately. The town has preserved many cultural resources that are enjoyed by the community including historic buildings in the downtown area; houses constructed in different periods in various residential neighborhoods; and significant architectural works, public art, town spring sites, magnificent specimen trees, and stagecoach routes.

The urban services of the town extend to Ellett Valley, Price Mountain, Brush Mountain, and New River. These areas appear to be a seamless extension of the town commercial and neighborhood areas to which they are adjacent. All areas are served with a comprehensive solid waste management and recycling program which is funded through a variable rate based on the amount of waste generated. Solid waste disposal is regionally coordinated and handled in a state-of-the-art, environmentally sensitive manner. Public water and sewerage systems serve all properties within the town with high quality drinking water and a public sewerage system that is state-of-the-art and effective in protecting and preserving the natural resources, stream, and groundwater quality, and plants and animals of the region. Electrical power is wirelessly transmitted along with communications. Power and communication antennas are integrated into the community along with existing infrastructure such as water towers, rooftops, steeples, treetops, signs, and other appropriate manmade or natural features. These public utilities include provisions to assure continuation of services in emergency situations. The government structure is regional in nature providing public schools, social services, and court services in Blacksburg, which are progressive, responsive, and accessible to the community.

The local transportation network includes extensive mass transit opportunities that include the Blacksburg Transit bus system, a street network that accommodates cars and alternative fuel vehicles, paths and lanes for bikes, skates, and other alternative transportation means, trails for horseback riders, and sidewalks and walkways for pedestrians. All facilities are accessible to the physically challenged and mapped on the Blacksburg Electronic Village. Bus stops include electronic kiosks that show the location of buses along the route. Streets are well maintained, appropriately lighted and landscaped with medians or street trees, emphasizing the town's identity as a green community. The region's transportation network is fully integrated and Blacksburg residents can easily reach their destinations in a safe, pleasant manner using whichever mode of transportation is desired.



Figure P-3, Blacksburg Transit

The community is linked to a regional transportation system with smart interstate highways that separate truck traffic, a high speed passenger service using light rail technology, commuter park and ride lots with bus access to nearby cities, and the Virginia Tech / Montgomery Executive Airport, a public airport serving commuter planes and corporate jet traffic. The New River Valley Airport serves as a major cargo depot for local industries and retail establishments, and the Roanoke Airport is the regional passenger airport serving large aircraft and national flights. The town enjoys a greenway trail network that extends to the Roanoke Valley, Catawba Valley, Radford, Christiansburg, and adjacent state and national parks including the Appalachian and New River Trails.

The Blacksburg community is extremely safe. The police are active in the community, supporting civic organizations, working with youth, and focusing on crime prevention. There are foot and bicycle patrols, along with vehicle patrols. Response to emergency calls for Police, Fire, and Rescue is

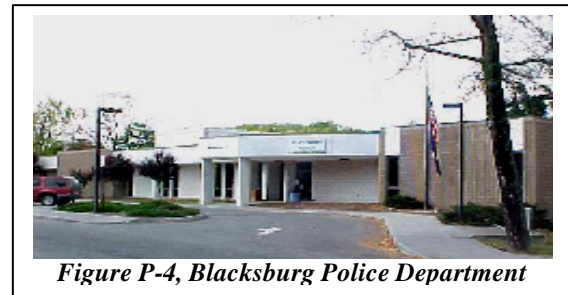


Figure P-4, Blacksburg Police Department

rapid and the personnel are well trained and professional in dealing with all situations in a proficient and compassionate manner. The town supports first class fire and rescue capability with stations located throughout the community and the best equipment available for the services provided.

The town has a low property tax rate and a diverse revenue stream, derived from various fees and taxes, which spreads the burden of municipal services across those who use the services. User fees are emphasized for utility and recreation services. The local government delivers cost effective services in partnership with private entities and civic organizations. The finances of the government are managed in a conservative manner, attaining the highest bond rating available for fiscal integrity, and invested in the appropriate maintenance, expansion, and improvement of the urban infrastructure.

Blacksburg is a renowned “whole life community” with excellent, accredited medical facilities and professionals in town that are easily accessible via public transit. Progressive public and private schools, and a university, which is internationally recognized in many areas including smart transportation technology, wireless communication, and global competitiveness, draw people to the community and maintain an intellectually stimulating environment.